

## House Republican Press Release

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### Klarides Hails House Passage of Family Relations Bill



#### *Legislation Sponsored By Klarides Impacts Child Custody And Support Laws*

**HARTFORD- Representative Themis Klarides (R-Derby)** today hailed the passage of legislation she cosponsored which makes several changes in child custody, support, and visitation statutes. Current law requires courts to be guided by the child's best interests and presumes joint custody is appropriate when the parents agree to it. The bill extends this presumption to other matters they agree on.

It also permits divorcing couples to submit disputes, except those involving child support, visitation, or custody, to binding arbitration. It requires advance approval by the court, which must determine that each party voluntarily agreed to arbitrate and the terms of their written arbitration agreement are fair and equitable under the circumstances.

It subjects marital arbitrations to the same rules, standards, and limited court review as currently apply to other arbitrations.

“This legislation should help make agreeable divorces less painful for all parties involved, particularly when it comes to circumstances surrounding children,” said Representative Klarides. “There is no reason the law should stand in the way of divorcing parents when they agree on what is in the best interest of their children.”

The bill requires parental responsibility plans to be submitted to the court if both parents agree to their terms. The objectives of the plan are to set forth each parent's authority and responsibility over the child and to provide for the child's physical care, emotional stability, and changing needs, as he or she grows older.

The court must adopt consensual parenting plans and make their terms its custodial and access orders unless it holds a hearing and determines that the plan is not in the child's best interests. The bill authorizes courts to modify their terms in the same manner it currently follows in other divorce matters involving children.